

THE MADRAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

Tuesday, the 28th March 1961.

The House met in the Council Chamber, Fort St. George, at three of the clock, Mr. Chairman (THE HON. DR. P. V. CHERIAN) in the Chair.

I.—QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS.

STARRED QUESTIONS.

Sudden spurt in the prices of food articles

*3 *S.N. Q.*—SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN: Will the Hon. the Minister for Home be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the Government are aware of the sudden spurt in the prices of food articles, edibles and beverages like coffee served in hotels in the City of Madras and elsewhere; and

(*b*) whether there is any proposal before the Government to take suitable steps to check the sudden rise in prices?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: (*a*) & (*b*) Yes Sir.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN: Do the Government propose to take steps under the Essential Commodities Act to prevent exploitation by hotel-keepers, and, if so, what are those steps?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: I am not aware of any such Act in force. Within the limits of law, the Government do take all necessary steps in order to see that there is no abnormal rise in prices of articles sold in the hotels.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN: Will they give us the details of the steps they propose to take?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: We can tell the House only if we have taken certain specific steps. I cannot at this stage say what the steps are. I have asked the Civil Supplies Commissioner to get into contact with the hotel owners in the City and the Collectors of districts with the hotel-keepers in the mofussil and discuss with them and find out what exactly is the cause for this rise in prices of the various dishes. Then, we will see what specfic steps we can take in the matter.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN: Will the Government bring to the notice of the Central Government that the spurt in prices is due to the taxation proposals of the Central Government?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM: That may be the view of the hon. Member. But this Government cannot take up that attitude.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Did the Government receive any reports from District Collectors about the rise in prices in the districts?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : We have not yet had any report. But we have asked them to go into the question, contact hotel-keepers, discuss with them and send us reports.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Are the Government aware that in the Railway Refreshment Rooms, the cost of Sambhar Bath has risen from 20 nP. to 30 nP. recently?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I am unable to understand this abnormal rise. I have figures here about the City. In small hotels the cost of meal supplied has increased by 5 nP.; in medium hotels, the increase is by 6 nP. and in big hotels it is only by 5 nP. per meal. Only the cost of fruit salad has risen by 10 nP.

SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Are the Government aware that prices in North Madras are higher than those in South Madras?

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : I have got figures for the City as a whole and if the hon. Member has any other information, I will take it and look into it.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : Is the Hon. Minister aware that apart from increase in prices, the quantity has decreased and the quality is not the same as it used to be before?

THE HON. SRI M. BHKTAVATSALAM : I am not aware of it. But I would invite the hon. Member to give me particulars about it.

SRI MOHAMED RAZA KHAN : May I submit that particulars are not necessary? Such of those as visit hotels—I am not one of those—complain that the quantity has decreased and the quality is not the same.

THE HON. SRI M. BHAKTAVATSALAM : Because the hon. Member put a supplementary question, I thought he had particular information about these, which the Government do not possess. That is why I wanted the hon. Member to give me information.

Educational concessions

* 207 Q.—SRI T. P. SRINIVASAVARADAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance be pleased to state—

(a) whether any sections of the Muslim community are treated as backward communities so far as educational concessions are concerned, and, if so, what they are; and

(b) whether the Muslims in the Kanyakumari district are also treated as backward community for educational concessions?